

Reclaim Education

Notes on the global struggle

Nigeria: University and Polytechnics Shutdown by Strikes

Since April, polytechnic teachers organised in the Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP) and their counterpart in the Senior Staff Association of Nigeria Polytechnics (SSANIP) have downed tools. They were soon joined by University teachers (Academic Staff Union of Universities) who started an indefinite strike last week. The unions are demanding improvement in members' condition of service and education funding.

Specifically ASUU is asking the federal government to implement an agreement it reached with university teachers in 2009. By all standards public tertiary education has been shut down in Nigeria. But this is not all. A few states still owing secondary school teachers Teachers Salary Structure (TSS) have had their schools shut by strikes. But the danger threatening education in Nigeria is far more sinister. The failures of capitalism in Nigeria has unleashed a vicious demon in the form of violent extremism fuelled by social discontent. Recently Yobe State closed all secondary schools in the state after Boko Haram extremists attacked some schools burning, killing and

maiming. In one single incident 34 students and a teacher died. Many more were injured, some burnt alive in their dormitory.



The Boko Haram group whose name translates roughly as "Western Education is evil" has been up in arms against the state since 2009 and has been responsible for thousands of death. The group operates in the North East of the country. Not surprising though since this region occupies the lowest rung of literacy and

access to formal education. Poverty and youth unemployment is more endemic in the North than any other parts of the country.

Not only extremist gangs however are targetting students for murder. Between January and June this year, nearly 10 university students were killed by police during protests against neo-liberal education policies. The latest of this killing occurred on June 12th at the University of Uyo. Issues that have forced students out in protest

in recent months include hike in fees and attacks on the right to independent unionism.

The strike of University and Polytechnic teachers is essentially a challenge to the neo-liberal philosophy of prioritising profits over society's needs. With huge revenue from crude oil and a 7% GDP growth, Nigeria has the capacity to adequately fund its education sector. Unfortunately this cannot be because 80% of Nigeria's oil wealth is consumed by just around 1% of the population – the super rich politicians and billionaire bosses.

Student groups like the Education Rights Campaign (ERC) have openly supported the strike actions. Over the last few weeks, some student protests have taken place especially over the Polytechnic strike. A solidarity rally is being planned at the University of Lagos next week. Central to this campaign is the need for education workers and students to unite together to defeat government funding cuts. Activists are also calling on the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) to call for a nationwide mass demo of students.

H.T Soweto
Education Rights Campaign
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About this newsletter

This newsletter is part of the communication infrastructure of the independent platform International Student Movement (ISM). The ISM is being used and shaped by individuals and groups around the world who are struggling against the increasing commercialisation of education and for free emancipatory education for all. This newsletter is the result of voluntary work done by a few individuals who are passionate about the cause. The positions expressed are not in any way representative for any group or the ISM as a whole.

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Development in Slovenia

The Slovenian Student Union has reached an agreement with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport to bring back the student's right to apply for a room in the student dorm during the graduate year. The irregularity concerning living arrangements for graduate students began in 2008 when the regulations for student dorms changed in accordance with the change in the duration of academic years, which resulted in abolishing that right for graduate students last June. This action had not only left a lot of empty rooms in student dorms, but also had an impact on the socio-economic status of graduate students.

The Slovenian Student Union has also reached an agreement

with the Slovenian Government regarding the new Scholarship Act which will take effect in the beginning of the year 2014. It brings many changes such as bringing back the right of receiving a national scholarship for high school students, the introduction of a new type of scholarship for the professions in decline and the new right of receiving several scholarships at the same time. The Scholarship Act is a step towards solving the student problematic.

And last, but not least. Between the 9th and 11th of June the first student referendum took place, where the students were deciding whether they agree with the decision of the Student Organization of University of Ljubljana to invest a

part of students' taxpayer money in a hotel investment. The referendum was held after the progressive student political organisation Iskra pointed out the problematic aspects of the investment such as the fact that a half million Euro investment was approved without the public discussion, in a time where there have been budget cuts for the social and other non-profit student activities, and where there could be an alternative, more beneficial use of the future hotel premises such as a place for student gathering or social apartments for young student families. The unofficial results of the referendum despite the low participation (only 0,64% of the student population) due to student holidays show a large disagreement with the investment

NOTHING IS GOING TO BE THE SAME AGAIN

24 - 29 August 2013 - Göztepe Özgürlük Parkı - İSTANBUL

As Özgür Eğitim Platformu (Free Education Platform), we started working on Free Education Camp three months ago and it was planned to take place in İzmir, Turkey. We reconsidered this decision after our resistance (Gezi resistance). As we all say: "Nothing Is Going To Be The Same Again!", all plans have become rotten after this resistance. As a result with the student commune, we decided to take the resistance that has arose all around Anatolia to the centre of the city, to İstanbul where it all began. We, students are the ones who raise this resistance step by step since the beginning, through the forums in the parks and through all protests. We are the '90s generation that mingles humour into the resistance, a generation that is acquainted with the 68s. To free the art and science, next semestre we are going to return to schools as a student movement that sets free all the streets of Anatolia and that takes down the walls of fear. We invite all the students who want to raise this resistance and build up the freedom commune all together, to İstanbul, to Özgürlük Parkı between the dates 24 - 29 August!

Everywhere is Taksim, Everywhere is Resistance!

Transnational Student Congress in the Making

Students at the University of Marburg as well as at Misr International University (MIU) in Cairo are currently preparing the Transnational Student Congress (TSC). It will take place in Marburg between Oct.28th and Nov.3rd 2013. The TSC will be open to students involved in emancipatory struggles anywhere in the world; people who struggle for issues such as equal access to education, women empowerment, student empowerment and gender equality. Besides being a platform to come together, network, exchange experiences and ideas and learn about the current situation elsewhere, the TSC will

also be a place to work on a common ground for a transnational network of emancipatory forces – maybe also somehow affiliated to the ISM platform. Make sure to register as soon as possible, if you plan to participate; especially if you are in need of an invitation letter to apply for a visa! For more details: transnationalstudentcongress.wordpress.com

Photo: July 4th Students clash with riot police in Lima, Peru over a new commercialization law threatening access to higher education and the autonomy of the universities. Several students were injured and arrested.

